

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____
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Bush slips one past spymaster

WASHINGTON (UPI) In a surprise move that caught even the nation's chief spymaster off guard, President Bush presented CIA Director William Webster with the presidential medal of freedom Thursday.

At a special ceremony called to present Webster with the national security medal, the president then, without forewarning, bestowed the second honor on the former judge and FBI director.

In awarding the medal, Bush hailed Webster as "a true patriot for whom love of country has been his guiding principle."

"... Three presidents asked him to guide agencies crucial to our domestic and international security," Bush said. "The United States honors a dedicated public servant for a lifetime of accomplishment, enhancing our national security and preserving freedom under law."

Earlier this week Bush asked Webster, who was clearly surprised by the second tribute, to serve an additional month as director of the CIA, through August, before his planned retirement.

Bush has nominated his deputy national security adviser, Robert Gates, to take over the agency but the Senate intelligence committee has delayed hearings because of developments in the ongoing independent counsel investigation of the Iran-Contra scandal. Gates, No. 2 at the agency during the sale of arms to Iran and diversion of proceeds to Nicaraguan rebels, was previously nominated to head the CIA but withdrew his name after fallout from the scandal.